



Breakaway keyworker guidance (BREAKAWAY)

CHILDREN'S HOME 2015 - REGULATIONS AND QUALITY STANDARDS

Regulation 5 – Engaging with the Wider System to Ensure Each Child's Needs are Met
The Children's Views, Wishes and Feelings Standard]

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

The term Key Worker is used to describe the person who has key responsibility for a child in the home. This guidance summarises the key responsibilities for that person.

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1. Management of Key Workers

The home's manager is responsible for ensuring that each child has a Key Worker who will facilitate the nurturing of positive and constructive relationship between the child and adults (preferably the key worker should be appointed prior to admission for pre-admission visits, or certainly upon admission for the child's introduction to the home). The home's manager should ensure that all Key Workers are suitably trained and fully competent to carry out the duties required of them, their PDP being regularly reviewed.

Ideally, the Key Worker should remain consistent throughout the child's time at the home; however, the home's manager may decide that the Key Worker for a child should change if:

- a. The child complains that the relationship is not working;
- b. The member of staff leaves the employment of the home or is likely to be on a long term absence;
- c. The member of staff is unable to establish a positive relationship;
- d. The manager believes that the relationship is not in the best interests of the child or the member of staff.

The home's manager will ensure that Key Workers are regularly supervised, appraised and offered support and guidance as needed.

2. The Role of the Key Worker - General

The concept of keyworkers has developed over many years. It dates from the days when large boarding schools and residential settings had dozens if not hundreds of children living within them. There was a clear need for ensuring that the quieter and often unnoticed youngsters did not get forgotten in the hustle and bustle of life in a large establishment.

Some children have no problem in communicating with the adults around them, and everybody knows if they need something.

For others this is not so, if there is a culture where the loud and noisy personalities are always first in the queue for things, the quieter ones will get lost and not have a voice.

So Keyworkers became the focus for individuals, to advocate for them and make sure that their needs were not lost amongst the crowd.

Keyworkers ensure that regular and routine matters are attended to. They ensure that the organisation properly addresses the needs of their Key Child.

Keyworkers become "The Corporate Parent" for their children.



Many people have the perception that children always have to like their Keyworker, this is not always the case but the keyworker has a clear responsibility for the individual child.

The Keywork role is to communicate to the child that they matter within the larger setting and ensure that their needs and wishes are always considered alongside those of others.

From this it means that Keyworkers are the ones who usually have to discuss the difficult areas in their key child's life, they have to help them cope with, and find way to overcome problems and challenges positively. This means that the relationship between children and their keyworkers can sometimes be challenging, full of ups and downs.

Keyworkers are also there to celebrate progress and achievement with children and ensure that it is recognised by everybody. Every child needs to have somebody they can turn to, to trust and to look out for them. Growing up is hard, think about your own lives. The difficulties can be daunting, even when you live within a loving and caring family.

All of the staff have a duty to each child living in the home regardless of their role.

What Do Keyworkers Do?

All aspects of your child's life are guided in the home under your direction. This direction is agreed with all STAKEHOLDERS in your child's life.

Stakeholders could be...

Parents, Carers, Social workers, Family members, Teachers and tutors, CAMHS workers, psychologists, Doctors or anybody else who is legitimately related to your child.

Being there for the child

Being there each morning (or making sure someone is doing it for you); checking that the bedroom is tidy, that there are clean clothes to wear, that s/he has had a wash, brushes their hair and are fully ready for the day ahead.

Talking to the child to make sure that s/he understands what is planned for the day.

If there are meetings, appointments or court appearances planned, talk through how these will go, possible issues etc. Raise any risks or concerns with your Line Manager or supervisor.

Being there during the day by taking a regular interest in the child's health needs, including appointments with the dentist, doctors, and opticians.

Make sure the child has adequate clothing - bought, cleaned and dried. Ensure that your child is clean and presentable. Bedrooms should be kept clean, personalised (the child should have an input into the personalisation of their room), in a good state of repair and be well equipped, there should be adequate facilities for personal belongings and clothes to be stored away and kept safe.

Safety - Children in residential care can feel vulnerable and frightened. Some are bullied or abused. Your job is to 'Be There' for them.

Know your key child- their file, background and family details; know their interests and hobbies; encourage them to take part, join clubs etc; find out what makes them happy, sad and angry; what frightens or worries them. Try to ease or reduce their concerns by offering advice, guidance or direction.

Being there at night:

Bed or night times are potentially the worst time for all children as it is a time when children will reflect and show anxiety about what has happened that day or in the past, or when children will show anxiety about what lies ahead in the morning or in plans for the future. You should spend time with the child helping them to identify and come to terms with their feelings and emotions. You must do what you can to ease or reduce fears or worries by talking to the child - in a positive and supportive way, and also by alerting colleagues to the child's feelings, identifying how this might affect the child's behaviour and give advice about how to deal with potential problems.

When settling down for bed it is also useful for doing practical things like making sure s/he has clean clothes for the next day, toiletries and a clean towel, that s/he knows what is going on the next day and any plans that have been put in place for the short term.

Being there day-to-day:

Plan for the future by remembering birthdays and anniversaries or special occasions and make them special for the child.



Help the child to maintain positive links with their family, significant people in their lives and friends by planning ahead for important dates that may have a relevance to the child such as birthdays, anniversaries and other significant events in their lives.

Keep all the other staff informed and up to speed about what is happening in the child's life.

Advocate on your child's behalf.

Get to know the Independent Reviewing Officer who is allocated to the child

Keep the child informed about any changes which are happening in their lives, both at the home, in education, in their overall plan, with the social worker and at home with their family.

You are responsible for the child even when you aren't there! If issues need to be dealt with when you are off duty make sure you inform the home's manager or colleagues. If you are likely to be away on leave plan ahead; don't leave the child alone wondering what is going to happen in your absence.

Keyworkers are responsible for telling the rest of the staff team how to work with their children, after they have agreed plans and strategies with stakeholders and their child. As well as giving feed back after every professional meetings that should be recorded and filed in young people files.

From the routine health checks that are necessary, like Eye tests, Dental Checks and general health checks right through to helping your child to express their choices and preferences for their future at reviews.

Meeting regularly with your child is the basic building block of Key working. From this you will begin to develop the bond which is so important in this relationship.

Not forgetting the important things in your child's life, or letting them be forgotten by others if you're not about.

Making sure that your child's needs are met, and helping your child tell the difference between needs and wants is another aspect which is essential in the Keywork relationship.

Our children's parents can be central to the efforts to help our children achieve their potential in their development. Communication with parents and working together with them to guide our work can have a high profile for keyworkers.

You are responsible for ensuring that all of the parts of your child's life at school fit together. You will be ensuring that Education and Welfare efforts have shared outcomes for individuals.

Ensuring that the targets set for youngsters in both school and the home do not conflict, but rather support each other. This means close communication with your child's teacher.

As you should be beginning to realise that your task as a keyworker is myriad and complex. It is essential that you recognise this and fully take on its responsibilities.

Don't forget....."I don't have any socks"... My shoes don't fit any more" and "can I have" ... will become very much your initial conversation starters with your child. Through attention to these things will develop the trust that will let you help your child with the more challenging issues as they crop up.

The Key Worker should be the main co-ordinator of multi-agency services for the child. They should help other staff follow the agreed approaches and care strategies set out in the Placement Plan. They should also help to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of each of the services.

The young person's files within Breakaway are the responsibility of the keyworker and their supervisor. These will be overseen by the manager. All other staff should pass information and documents over to the keyworker rather than filing it themselves. unless keyworker is on annual leave or on sickness leave

During the early stages of placement, the Key Worker should help the new child settle in and make sure they have a copy of the Children's Guide and understand the house rules. As well as asking their views wishes and feelings on their placement and the long term plan

The Key Worker should ensure that all the child's records and recording systems are adequately set up and that recording is taking place.

The Key Worker, supported by the rest of the staff team, should assist the child to maintain social, recreational, cultural and religious links through daily living activities inside and outside the home.

3. Key Worker Guidance

3.1 Keyworkers and Planning.

As with all other aspects of Key working, planning for your child is complex and wide ranging. Some examples are...

How does your child like to be woken in the morning? Are there ways that we can change our approach to waking up your child that will avoid conflict first thing in the morning?



Discuss this with your key child and put together a plan which all other staff can follow, we become consistent, your child is involved in his plan and less likely to have a problem with it.

Or...

Your child's Review is only a few weeks away, is there anything about their current plan that you have discussed with them that needs looking at and possibly changing?

Help your child put their thoughts down in writing or find another way for them to present them to the review (maybe make a video). Pull together any supporting evidence you have to back up the request.

Or...

Your child is constantly getting held by staff due to their behaviour.

Talk about the incidents with your child. See if you can find out what is happening to cause the incidents. See if there is anything that can be done by staff or your child to help avoid the problems. Talk these discussions through with the case manager. Then we can change the behaviour management plan and share with parents and social workers.

All of our children have plans for their placement. These address long term aims, medium term targets and day to day arrangements for their lives at Mallards.

A Keyworker is responsible for making sure that any changes that happen for their child are reflected in these plans.

They should discuss life changes with their child and family, looking at how they affect the plans in place for the youngster.

3.2 Keyworkers, Incentives and Targets

Children's behavioural responses require understanding, there is often underlying reasons that may not be immediately apparent. Children's behaviour can be interpreted as a means of communication. Over time the Key worker will build a working knowledge of behavioural responses to a range of stimuli, both what may be considered positive and negative. There are few occasions when children behave randomly for no apparent reason.

Our children need motivating to do things they would rather not do, just like you.

We use targets to help our children focus upon areas that are problematic for them. Although they might not agree with you that there is a problem at first.

A Keyworkers task, one of the many, is to help children look at problem areas or situations, find another way to resolve the problem, and then help the child work towards using this new strategy keeping the rest of the team aware of changes and new ideas.

If we set too many targets for a child at any time it will be too much for them to focus on. Communicate with your child and decide what you both feel is the best things to focus on. We can't expect our children to deal with all their challenges in one go. It is up to us to help them pick off the ones with the biggest impact first then work towards the others later.

Your child will need to have an incentive to change things they've always done a certain way.

They need realistic and achievable incentives. It's not very encouraging if you've got an incentive that you've got no hope in achieving. Understanding a child's disability is key to agreeing the range of incentives or sanctions. Sanctioning a child who has a sensory issue for damaging clothes would not be appropriate it is therefore key that we match both incentives and sanctions to the level of development, age and understanding that the individual child has.

We should also be trying to work with our child's teachers to encourage their education, so talking to your child's tutor/teacher and setting some of the targets for care and education on similar themes will help this happen.

If parents and carers are aware of what we are focusing on and what incentives we are using it might help them use similar strategies when the child is at home. This will give some additional consistency in our children's lives.

3.3 Keyworkers and Communication.

Keyworkers are central to the life of a child at Breakaway. This means that your communication is crucial with parents, carers, school teacher, SW, GP, etc - And not forgetting...**the Child**...

For example, If you are arranging a child's birthday treat who do you need to speak with?

1. Young person, who do they want to go on the treat?



2. The designated Team Leader, how will the treat or trip be staffed?
3. The shift leader of the shift that the treat will happen on, to ensure staffing and transport arrangements are sorted and people are aware.

This example, I hope demonstrates the need for planning and communication if all is to go successfully. All aspects of a child's life at Breakaway's require the same level of planning and communication.

3.4 How do Keyworkers do all this?

Talk to people... especially your child.

Make sure your shift leader gives you the time to do your keywork chores.

If in doubt....ASK

Make sure your keywork sessions are fun for your child. That way they will want to spend time with you and your relationship will flourish. This can be hard, as it is often the case that keyworkers are the deliverers of the more negative messages. Try to approach this in a way that demonstrates that your trying to help resolve problems and not just nagging.

Get other people views on your child, it's not just about you and them, it's about them and everybody...

As a key worker, it is your responsibility to ensure the following are completed:

The key worker is expected to take a lead role to share information to other members of the team

1. At least one key work session **MUST** be completed with the young person each week and must be written up and signed off by the key worker and young person.
2. Regular contact with the child's school to get an oversight of progress or issues in school/college/work.
3. Weekly telephone call to Parents/Carers – Summary of their week, including positives and any issues that occurred during the week.
4. Individual targets set for the young person to be agreed on by the key worker and young person.
5. Key worker progress report, which identifies progress made or not and therefore what the remedial action will be.
6. Review and update Placement Plans regularly and after every professional meeting with agreed action plan.
7. Review and update Risk Assessments regularly and after every incident.
8. Review and update Health Care Plans regularly especially if they have had a GP/Hospital/Dentist/Optician/ appointment and any other appointments.
9. Monthly key worker progress reports; Feedback
10. Review and update Behaviour Management Plans regularly and after every incident

The statement 'Review and Update' is used a lot in the last list. What does it mean...It means read the individual document and decide if it still represents where your child is in their journey...does the document or plan still fit?

Have there been any incidents or experiences which change things?

Does your child and her/his family agree with our plans?

Has the social worker agreed with them?

If they have, do we have a signature on the document or an email confirming agreement?

Understanding how puberty and the subsequent hormonal changes will be key in making sense of any behaviour change.

3.5 Complaints

The Key Worker must ensure the child understands how the Complaints Procedures work, that s/he has a copy of the authority's complaints procedure and is confident enough to use the procedures if necessary.



Also it is the Key Worker's responsibility to ensure the child has an up to date copy of the Children's Guide and other information produced by the home for children; ensure the child is fully conversant with the Fire Precautions and is aware of fire exits.

4. Planning and Recording a Key Worker Session

Key working sessions provide you with a chance to observe the child, assess their progress, develop your relationship and identify and resolve problems etc.

You must arrange a Key Worker session with your key child as soon as possible after s/he is placed and then weekly thereafter.

The overall purpose of Key Worker sessions is to discuss progress, problems and achievements.

There are various ways to do this, either formally in a meeting or informally whilst undertaking an activity.

PLAN AHEAD: It is not exhaustive, but this is a list of things you should do in planning a Key Worker session:

- Plan ahead, talk to the child and build time into your week when it will be suitable to conduct a Key Worker session;
- It is important that the child feels comfortable so consider which they might prefer: a formal meeting or informal i.e. during an activity;
- Plan the meeting or activity in advance, arrange for petty cash etc.;
- Inform the child of the date, time and where you will be having the meeting;
- Ask the child to think about issues s/he wants to talk about;
- If the child is non-verbal; capture the response through demeanor, describe what they did, how they reacted, etc
- What is the purpose of the session? Dealing with specific issues, behaviors or problems, planning for a review or court appearance, developing ideas for the future, talking about the past;
- Think through (with your manager) what you need to deal with or talk about and how you can make it work;
- If planning a first session, as soon as possible after the child's placement, make sure all the basics are in place: that the child understands why s/he has been placed, the timescales for the placement, that a Placement Plan has been completed or a date for completion is set (go through the Placement Plan with the child, identify any areas of concern), that the child has a copy of the home's Children's Guide or other information provided for children, that the child is fully aware of the Fire Precautions, that s/he has necessary toiletries, clothing, bedding, towels etc.;
- At the first meeting or soon after, agree or set some boundaries or rules about how you will conduct your sessions. For example: That you will meet once a week, that you can't offer confidentiality but you will keep information safe, that you will be keeping a record, that you will be on time, what sort of meeting would suit: formal or activity based (if so what activities);
- If you need to deal with negative behaviors or issues think carefully about how to present them. Don't forget you need the young person to accept the negatives and be prepared to change;
- Relationships take time and change is always difficult so don't try to do too much too soon;
- The child may try to reject or avoid you. Don't take this personally; keep at it but talk to your manager if you need support or guidance;
- Start small, concentrate on the positives;
- If you have any concerns about child's safety or well being talk to your manager.

Any team member can have a key work type (1:1 session) discussion with a child.

Don't forget to record it and place a copy in the child's file and upload on ICS regularly.

There is a monitoring sheet for monthly key working/1:1 sessions for all children.